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# Air Resources Board

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Gray Davis  
Governor

## MEMORANDUM

TO: All Managers and Supervisors

FROM: Cindy Francisco  
Safety Coordinator

DATE: September 5, 2000

SUBJECT: SAFETY MEETING IDEAS -- SEPTEMBER 2000

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Suggested issues to discuss during your next meeting are:

1. Who Do Employees Report Health & Safety Concerns To?

Although the responsibilities for health and Safety are shared between the Executive Office, Managers/Supervisors and all employees, employees are encouraged to talk with their manager regarding health and safety concerns. Employees can also contact their division Health and Safety Coordinator or Cindy Francisco, Safety Coordinator. Another means to report concerns anonymously is through the Virtual Brown Bag.

2. What to Do When You Hear a Siren When Driving

City of Sacramento Fire Department has given tips on what to do when you hear emergency vehicle sirens while driving:

- When at an intersection: Stop at the limit line or the cross walk on a red light at the intersection; or yield the right of way when able to do so--that may mean moving through the intersection first on a green light and then pulling over to the right as soon as possible after the intersection.
- When on a one-way street: Pull over to the right when safely able to do so; or slow down and pull to the left to make a safe lane of passage for the emergency vehicles when you are in the left lane and there is traffic on your right.
- When on the freeway: Pull over to the right when it is safe to do so and continue to move forward at a safe speed.
- Don't panic, don't stop in the middle of the road or intersection, don't cross two or more lanes of traffic to pull to the right, or don't ever stop on a freeway.

### 3. Violence in the Workplace Information for Prevention

Unfortunately, violence occurring in the workplace is on the rise. Read about common myths about this frightening phenomenon on the attached. ARB's Violence in the Workplace Policy can be found in ASL 98-15 and ASL 98-16.

Document your meeting by using Form HS-1 "Safety Meeting Report" which I have attached for your convenience. This can also be used, if you choose, to route the information to each employee. This record should be kept in your files for one year.

Attachment

cc: Administrative Liaisons

# Common Myths About Workplace Violence

## *Workplace violence is committed by people who suddenly snap under pressure.*

The tragic truth is that the records of people who commit workplace violence almost always show warning signs. The violent employee often has a history of past violence, substance abuse, depression, obsession with weapons, suspicion of others or problems with family and relationships. In addition, there's usually an incident that triggers a violent reaction.

## *Most workplace violence is committed by disgruntled employees.*

Although sensational post office and other workplace homicides gain widespread media attention, most workplace violence is committed by criminals in the course of a robbery or by clients or patients in hospitals, nursing homes, social service agencies and law enforcement facilities. Seventy-five percent of workplace homicides are robbery-related. Nevertheless, employee violence concerns us all because it's a factor in every workplace, not just those workplaces that interact with the public. Employee violence is the fastest growing category of violence in the workplace.

## *Most situations will resolve themselves if given a cooling-off period.*

The issues that cause an employee to become violent don't arise and then just disappear by themselves. Nearly all violent incidents by employees are the result of long-simmering problems that have been ignored by management. Violent employees usually have a long history of violent and disruptive behavior before they actually erupt. Intervention, in the form of counseling, discipline, mediation or termination, must take place. Ignoring the warning signs is the worst way to respond to potential violence.

## *If we learn to recognize the potentially violent employee, we can stop workplace violence.*

The potentially violent employee is only part of the problem. Violence is more likely to happen in workplaces that:

- don't have company policies or have managers that ignore threats and signs of violence.
- fail to properly screen new employees.
- don't provide proper training and coaching for employees.
- create a high-stress workplace.
- terminate employees without due process.
- fail to enforce sexual harassment policies or disciplinary procedures.
- ignore employees' complaints about another employee's behavior.
- subject employees to frequent change and uncertainty as to the future.
- have inadequate security measures and procedures in place.